



Rock Farm Ecotourism Ltd

Sustainability Plan

Last updated 23rd September 2025

1. Purpose and Scope

This Sustainable Management System (SMS) provides a framework for Rock Farm Ecotourism Ltd to manage its operations responsibly across environmental, social, cultural, economic, health and safety, human rights, and risk/crisis domains.

The system applies primarily to the accommodation business, but will also look at associated business areas including the organic farm operations, wellness facilities, outdoor activities as well as events and food & beverage services.

2. Governance and Responsibility

- **Senior Management (Carina and Alex Conyngham)** Approve policies, reviews performance.
- **Sustainability Coordinator (Carina Conyngham)** Oversees implementation, monitoring, and reporting.
- **All Staff:** Responsible for compliance in daily operations.
- **Stakeholders (guests, suppliers, local community):** Engaged through feedback and partnership.

3. Policy Statement

Rock Farm Ecotourism Ltd commits to:

- Protecting and enhancing the natural environment of the Boyne Valley.
- Operating ethically, profitably, and transparently.
- Safeguarding the health, safety, and rights of staff, guests, and partners.
- Supporting local communities and culture.
- Maintaining preparedness for risks and crises.



4. Objectives and Targets

A. Environmental

Objective: Reduce ecological footprint

This objective is the premise of the Rock Farm Ecotourism project at Rock Farm. We have built the Lime House, Reception and Swallow's Nest out of strawbales which were harvested and baled on the barley fields surrounding the farm. We built an Integrated Constructed Wetland (ICW) in 2015 to process all the wastewater on site and to create a source of compost that will be available for landscaping from 2030. We also installed solar thermal panels on the roofs of the two guest houses (River House and Lime House) to provide domestic hot water throughout the year using solar thermal energy. These systems have been maintained since they were installed in 2015.

We currently source most of our produce for guest catering from the farm based on seasonal menus of beef, pork and vegetables from the veg garden.

Sustainable Energy Management

As evidenced by the Energy Management Plan, Rock Farm Slane has achieved the European benchmark of excellence ($= < 180 \text{ kWh/m}^2$) at 183 kWh/m^2 in 2024. It is likely that the actual energy per square metre is a little less as the electricity supply to the accommodation area also supplies the organic farm and the events space. However 2025 marks the launch of our in-house laundry, so we will focus next year on sub-metering as one of the ongoing measures to provide more accurate readings and KPIs in the future taking into account the addition of electrical consumption from the laundry.

- Target: Switch to a 100% green tariff (September 2025)
- Target: Lower the total energy consumption (kWh per square metre) to under 180 kWh , e.g. 10% less 162 kWh/m^2 by September 2026
- Target: Achieve 80% renewable electricity supply from solar PV by 2027 (baseline 2024)
- Target: Replace gas for heating with biomass from the Estate by 2027 (baseline 2024)

Sustainable Water Management

As evidenced by the Water Management Plan, Rock Farm Slane has achieved close to the European benchmark of excellence for water consumption per bed night of 0.18 m^3 (Hotels $= \leq 0.14 \text{ m}^3$). It is noted that hostels and campsites with shared showers should bring the benchmark to 0.1 m^3 . However given that there are 2 x 6-bedroom houses on the property. It would seem prudent to aim to meet or out-perform a benchmark of 0.12 m^3 per bed night in 2026. This will be hard to achieve with the new laundry in place as of July 2025. However sub-metering and closer management by the operating team will ensure that leaks are detected and dealt with more quickly.



Looking to the future we have set new ambitious targets to continue to reduce our ecological footprint in the coming years:

- Target: Lower the total water consumption per bed night to under 0.12m³ by September 2026
- Target: Reduce water consumption by 10% by 2026 (baseline 2021)

Sustainable Waste Management

As evidenced by the Waste Management Plan baseline survey, Rock Farm Slane has achieved below the European benchmark of excellence for waste generation per guest ($\leq 0.6\text{kg}$ per guest) with only 0.09kg per guest generated.

Looking to the future we have set new ambitious targets to continue to process all biodegradable waste, except meat and bones, which due to health and safety measures will have to be deposited in the brown bins for collection and processing off-site:

- Target: Process all biodegradable waste, except for meat and bones, on the farm by September 2026 (baseline 2024)

Objective: Enhance biodiversity

We built the Glamping yurts and Le Shack communal building on wooden platforms to minimise the impact on the ground underneath as the Glamping field is adjacent to the Boyne Woods Natural Heritage Area (NHA), the River Boyne SAC (Special Area of Conservation) and SPA (Special Protection Area).

Since the inception of the ecotourism project at Rock Farm, we have planted 1.3km of hedgerows and over 6 hectares of agro-forestry in the areas surrounding the accommodation business.

We are committed to the continued preservation and enhancement of the farm area through our organic farm certification and participation in the NPWS programme re-wilding / extensive grazing programme on the Boyne Meadow.

- Target: Have all woodlands on the farm managed under a Continuous Forestry Cover scheme by 2027
- Target: Have all the large woodlands on the farm connected via hedgerows by 2027

B. Social

Objective: Foster positive community relationships.

We have offered farm tours to local secondary schools (Ballymakenny College, Drogheda) and colleges (LMETB Tourism Course) as well as educational tour operators (GoAhead Tours) and farm groups (Farm Tours Ireland) on an ad-hoc basis since 2019. In 2020 Carina applied for



CEDRA funding to set up Slane Food Circle which was a group of 4 local farmers (including Rock Farm) who collaborated on farm tours and selling farm produce. The farms all of which are around the village of Slane continue to work together and with Boyne Valle Flavours on private farm tours and Rock Farm Eco continues to sell Boyne Valley Farm House cheese and Cockagee cider at the Farmer's Market and events.

Rock Farm also hosts a monthly Farmer's Market which started out as a weekly Farmer's Market during Covid in June 2020 and now takes place on a monthly basis with the re-launch on Sunday 21st September. This gives local artisans and food producers the opportunity to sell to Rock Farm guests and visitors for a relatively low cost with no pitch fee and just a 10% commission on sales. We will also hold 3 x Christmas Markets on 21st 22nd and 23rd December as part of our Christmas Food Offering.

Rock Farm also hosts a local Ladies Sauna group on a Wednesday at 6pm which is a great way for local influencers to come and hang out, enjoy the sauna and contribute their well-received ideas for other community efforts on and off the farm.

Carina sits on the board of Boyne Valley Tourism and the Irish Adventure Tourism Association IAAT as the Activities officer and Ecotourism representative since 2024 and 2021 respectively. This involves attending regular board meetings and advising on green measures and initiatives within the different bodies.

- Target: Offer reduced-rate access to ecotourism and organic farm tours to local schools starting in March 2026
- Target: Offer reduced-rate retreats for charities and social enterprise groups mid-week including a free sustainability tour
- Target: Offer volunteering opportunities to guests staying on the farm from March 2026 focusing on ecotourism projects like firewood processing, composting, landscaping and planting.
- Target: Add the ecotourism documents to all pre-arrival communication including responsible travel.
- Target: Record a YouTube video of your sustainability tour to educate guests about our eco-friendly practices and community engagement projects

C. Cultural

Objective: Celebrate and conserve heritage.

Alex's family have been on the Estate since 1705 and while the focus at the Farm is on the natural heritage, we incorporate the Conyngham family's businesses at Slane Castle and Slane Distillery into our correspondence and communication with guests. The <https://rockfarmslane.ie/about/> page incorporates information about the family and heritage of the estate. The Conyngham family history and Slane Castle heritage is also incorporated into our guided tours. We continue to host large groups for the Slane Concerts and other events in collaboration with both Slane Castle and Slane Distillery.

For 2026 and 2027 we have the following cultural heritage targets



- **Target:** Host 4 cultural workshops involving local artists, crafts, music and folklore at our monthly Farmer's Market
- **Target:** Ensure all marketing always reflects authentic Irish culture and avoids misappropriation.
- **Target:** Provide guests with fun local phraseology and talking points (+ those to avoid) when visiting local pubs, restaurants and cafés

D. Economic

Objective: Operate profitably while supporting local economies.

Currently 90% of our procurement is spent with Irish-owned businesses. Our menus are based on local ingredients and we work with Boyne Valley Flavours to keep up with local suppliers and stallholders for the Farmer's Market.

50% of our bookings are made directly with our customers

- **Target:** Provide annual sustainability and financial transparency report for 2027

E. Health and Safety

Objective: Provide a safe environment for staff, guests, and suppliers.

To date we have had zero serious workplace accidents since inception in 2013. We have also had no incidents reported to our insurance company in the last 5 years. All our kitchen staff have HACCP level 1 or 2 training completed.

Rodent control is provided by Outsource a local company in Drogheda. We are also experimenting with pistol traps for rats and hope to set up a self-certified system that avoids the use of 3rd generation rodenticide by 2027.

- **Target:** First aid renewal courses for all staff by 2026
- **Target:** Quarterly safety drills for fire, first aid and emergency procedures starting in November 2025

F. Human Rights & Labour

Objective: Uphold fair labour practices and human rights.

All our staff contracts are compliant with Irish labour law. We use an external HR service (Peninsula HR) for advice and support on all aspects of HR. Our employee handbook is regularly updated by Peninsula HR and we use online systems and apps for employee clock in and absence requests

- **Target:** Incorporate an ecotourism feedback system to encourage employees to speak out about issues with regards to sustainability management in our HR systems
- **Target:** Implement annual staff survey on fairness, inclusion, and wellbeing – to be incorporated in staff annual reviews from November 2025

G. Risk and Crisis Management



Objective: Minimise business disruption and protect people and assets.

We continue to work with local authorities and utilities, e.g. water (Isce Eireann) and electricity suppliers (ESB) to ensure that we make plans for any outages including hiring generators, keeping an emergency bottled water pack in the canteen and re-arranging guest stays if there is a planned water or power outage.

- **Target:** Maintain and annually review Crisis Response Plan (fires, floods, pandemics, cyber-security).
 - **Target:** Conduct 2 scenario-based crisis simulations per year.
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5. Implementation Tools

- **Policies & Procedures:** Environmental policy, H&S policy, Code of Conduct.
- **Training & Awareness:** Annual sustainability induction for all staff.

Environmental Management Workshop completed on Wednesday 17th September

Target: Establish a green team to promote shared responsibility for sustainability

Target: Encourage employees to provide suggestions for improving sustainability policies or finding ways to generate revenue through a sustainability lens.

Target: Organise activities aligned with environmental events such as Earth Day or arrange clean-up days. These activities provide opportunities for employees to spend time together outside of regular work and raise awareness about sustainability issues.

- **Monitoring & KPIs:** Monthly waste/energy/water reporting; guest and staff satisfaction surveys.
 - **Documentation:** Sustainability Manual, Supplier Code, Incident Reports.
 - **Engagement:** Guest information packs, farm tours, workshops, community outreach.
- Target:** Seek community development funds to invest in projects that empower local people.

Target: Re-start the Slane SEAI Sustainable Energy Community in collaboration with Slane Castle and Slane Distillery – currently still at Learn Stage

6. Monitoring and Reporting

- Annual Sustainability Report published on website and shared with stakeholders.
 - Quarterly KPI review meetings with management team.
 - Stakeholder feedback loop via surveys, comment cards, and community forums.
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7. Review and Continuous Improvement

Rock Farm Slane

www.rockfarmslane.ie

Sus Mgmt System ver.2 (Sept 2025)



- SMS reviewed annually by senior management.
- Objectives and targets updated every 3 years or as required by legislation/market trends.
- Continuous improvement embedded through staff innovation suggestions and best-practice benchmarking.